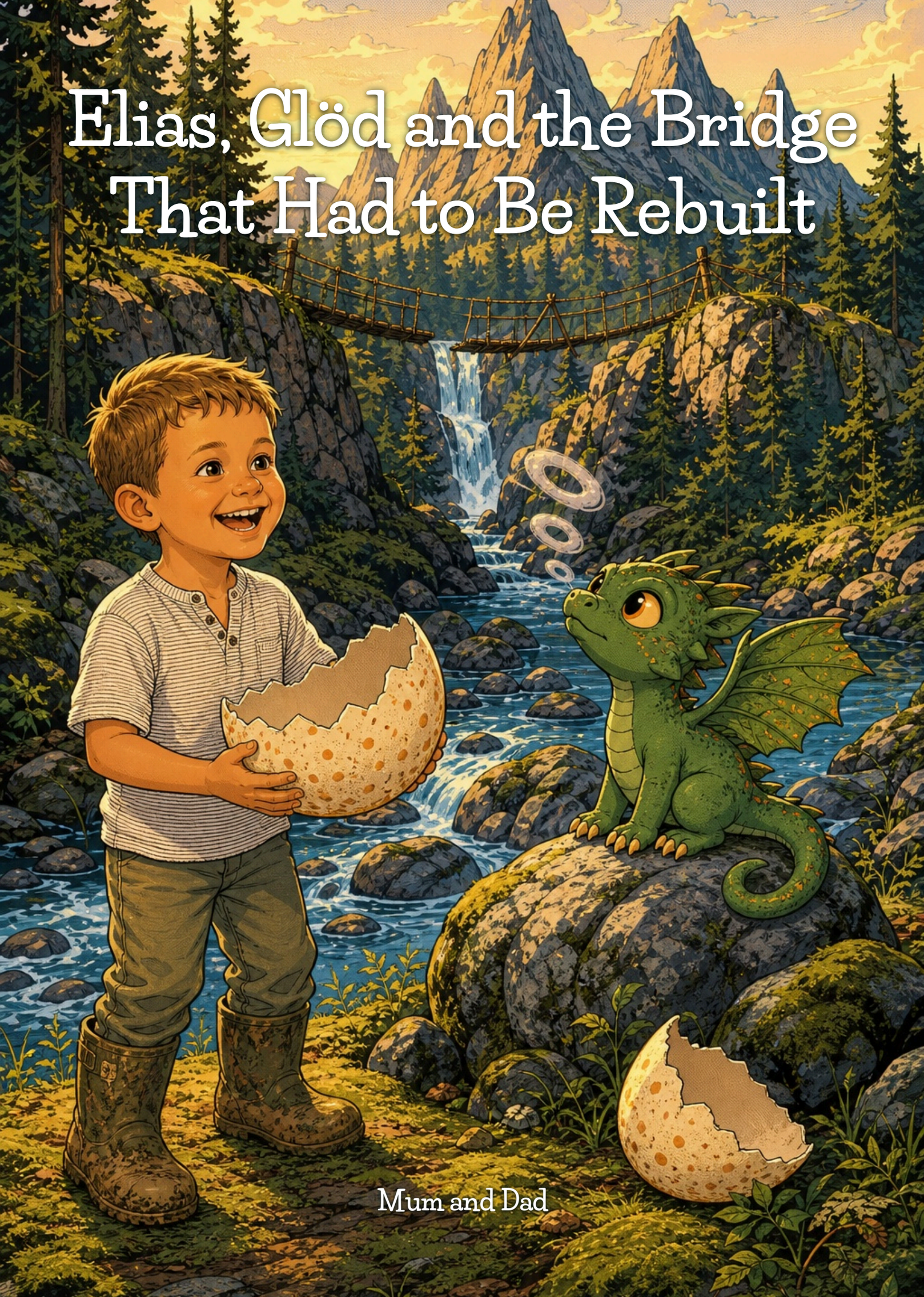
Elias, Glöd and the Bridge That Had to Be Rebuilt



Mum and Dad

This book belongs to

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Welcome to this sample book! It is made just like your own will be, from the photos and choices shown alongside, and shows what a story from Saga to You can look like. Turn the pages, read, and imagine your child as the hero of their very own tale.

Behind the house, the stream ran over flat stones and beneath a root that looked like a crooked nose. Elias was looking for straight sticks for the wall of his den. A den needed sticks that held together, not sticks that went crack the moment you looked at them.

Between two stones lay something round and large. It was too big for a bird and too warm for a stone. Elias placed both hands around the shell. Its coppery spots glimmered. From inside came a sound: crack. Then: crack, crack. Elias held the egg still. What could be about to come out in the stream behind the house?





First, a green snout poked out of the crack. Then came two round eyes, four little claws and a tail that accidentally knocked over a leaf. The tiny dragon sneezed. Poff! Three grey smoke rings drifted over the water and caught around the tip of a reed.

'Glöd,' said Elias. The dragon looked at the rings, folded down his leaf-like wings and blew another one, even smaller. On the inside of the shell were three little peaks and a line of tiny letters: A baby dragon must be home when the sun sets behind three peaks. Elias looked up. Far away, above the trees, were three mountain peaks. The sun had already begun to sink. 'Dragon Mountain,' he said. 'Come on!'

The forest beyond the stream was dark beneath the fir trees, though the sky above was still bright. Elias walked between roots that crept across the path. Glöd sat on his shoulder, gripping the seam of his jumper with two little claws.

At every fork in the path, Glöd blew a smoke ring. The first settled around a mushroom. The second whizzed into a bush. The third shot straight up and vanished. 'We'll look at the shell instead,' said Elias, holding up the three peaks. He searched for a gap between the trees in the same direction. Then there came a thump, splash, thump from further ahead. The ground was covered in enormous round footprints.





In the biggest footprint, three pine needles and a beetle were floating about, the beetle paddling with all its legs. Elias put his shoe beside it. It looked like a tiny raisin. Glöd blew a smoke ring down into the puddle. The ring rose up again, round and neat.

'A giant has gone the same way as us,' said Elias. The footprints led to the rapids. There hung the bridge between the cliffs, its ropes as thick as plaits. Several planks were missing from the middle. The water foamed far below, and the sun had turned orange at its edge. Elias pressed his lips together. 'Try, look, rebuild,' he said. 'First we have to mend the bridge.'

Elias climbed onto a low fallen tree trunk a little way from the edge. From there, he could see the whole bridge without having to step onto it. The planks that remained were fastened with wooden pegs and rope. On the ground lay two straight branches, some old rope and a few pegs that must have come loose long ago.

Glöd blew a smoke ring through the gap. It slipped straight between the two side ropes and faded away on the other side. ‘Just wide enough,’ said Elias. He laid the branches next to each other, tested them with his hand and began to tie. A little piece of bridge took shape on the ground. It almost looked like a wall in his den. Almost.





Elias pulled the last knot tight. Then he and Glöd carefully pushed the piece of bridge out towards the gap. At first, it lay still between the ropes. Elias had time to think: It'll probably hold.

Then the shortest branch bent. Creak. The rope slipped. The bridge twisted like a fish on a hook and splashed down into the rapids. One rope danced after it like a wet worm. Glöd blew a little smoke ring, but it broke apart before it had time to become round. Elias looked at the sun. It was down by the treetops now. He wanted to tug at the rope again, harder and harder. Instead, he sat on the fallen trunk and looked. From there, he saw something else.

In his den, Elias usually made walls using three sticks: two leaning ones and one holding them together. A triangle did not wobble like a row of sticks. He pulled out the two longest branches and laid them with their tips touching.

'Try, look, rebuild,' he said. Glöd sent three smoke rings towards the ropes. The first flew through an empty hole. The second caught around a loose knot. The third turned back exactly where Elias held the triangle. 'There!' He tightened the knot, fixed on the final plank and gave the support a gentle tug. It stayed still. On the other side of the bridge, a cave mouth gaped between the rocks.





On the other side of the bridge, the path led straight into a cave. A few steps in, crystals stood in clusters: thin as icicles, wide as chair legs, crooked as wonky teeth. They were dark, though the odd tip still held a tiny warm glimmer.

By the wall stood a stone sign, almost covered in dust. It said: Warm dragon breath awakens crystal light. Not fire. Not a torch. Only warm breath. Further in, the passage bent away from every bit of daylight. It was as black as the inside of a closed box. Soon, someone's hand would find the sign.

Elias took one step in and could not even see his own fingers. Glöd gave a little squeak and pressed his warm green side against Elias's shoe. Elias felt his way along the wall until his fingers found the letters on the stone sign.

'Warm dragon breath,' he read. Glöd looked at his snout and blew a teeny-tiny smoke ring at a crystal. Elias cupped his hands behind the snout so that the warmth would not fly in every direction. The crystal blinked once. Then it glowed green from within. 'Try, look, rebuild,' said Elias. Glöd took a deeper breath. Another crystal lit up further ahead. Then one more. But the path soon turned again.





The crystals shone only as far as Glöd's warm puffs could reach. When Glöd needed to rest, they stopped beside a blue crystal that glowed on one side and yellow on the other. Elias counted to three and pointed. 'There, there, there.'

At the next bend, a crystal was completely covered in brown mud. Glöd blew, but a sad smoke ring fell to the ground. Elias took a twig and carefully scraped away the mud. Not too deep. Not too fast. When the surface gleamed, Glöd warmed it with a little puff. Light raced through the crystal and showed a narrow exit. Outside, three rocky peaks could be seen. But would anyone up there see Glöd?

They came out just as the sun lay like an orange disc between the trees. Before them stood Dragon Mountain with its three peaks. In its side was an opening so large that a cloud could almost have flown inside.

Glöd stopped on the path. He blew a smoke ring towards the opening. It grew thinner and thinner, and vanished before it reached it. Elias took out one half of the eggshell. The coppery spots made three peaks, just like the mountain. By the path, three crystals stuck up from the ground: one small, one medium and one tall. Elias crouched down. 'We don't have to shout,' he said. 'We can build something that flashes.'





Elias placed the crystals on a flat stone: small, medium, tall. Like Dragon Mountain. Glöd warmed the small one first. Then the medium one. At last, the tall one. Three lights flashed in the dusk, clear even from far away.

Something moved inside the opening. A large snout appeared. Then another, and several friendly dragon heads with calm eyes. A broad paw landed on the stone beside Glöd without touching him. Glöd blew a smoke ring straight up. Everyone saw it. The big dragons answered with gentle puffs that made the three crystals sparkle. Glöd ran forwards, but turned back towards Elias and the shell.

One of the big dragons pushed a scale across the stone. It shimmered green, copper and blue, like the stream when the sun shone on it. Glöd took the scale between his claws and placed it in Elias's hand.

'It can live in my den,' said Elias. He turned towards home, towards the bridge, the forest and the stream behind the house. Behind him came a little snort. Elias looked over his shoulder. Glöd stood by the opening with the big dragons behind him. No smoke ring came from his snout. A small, steady flame curled up into the evening air and sparkled in the scale in Elias's hand.



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Elias finds a large, warm egg among the stones in the stream behind the house, and Glöd hatches from it: a little green dragon who can only blow smoke rings. Before the sun disappears behind Dragon Mountain's three peaks, they must mend a broken bridge, awaken crystals in a black cave and show that Glöd has come home.

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